

And now I'd like those who have been assigned the task of standing up here to join me as I sign the national monuments.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:08 p.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Vice Adm. Conrad C. Lautenbacher, Jr., USN (Ret.), in his capacity

as Administrator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; and Gov. Benigno R. Fitial of the Northern Mariana Islands and his wife Josepina. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. The proclamations are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Statement on the Establishment of the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument, Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, and the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument January 6, 2009

### *Ensuring Navigations Rights and Freedoms, and the Global Mobility of U.S. Armed Forces in the World's Oceans*

On June 15, 2006, I established the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National Monument, and on May 15, 2007, I instructed the U.S. delegation to the International Maritime Organization to submit a proposal for international measures to enhance protection of the monument. On April 4, 2008, the International Maritime Organization adopted our proposal, and the Papahānaumokuākea Particularly Sensitive Sea Area (PSSA) was established.

On this occasion of the establishment of the Marianas Trench Marine National Monument, the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument, and the Rose Atoll Marine National Monument, I confirm that the policy of the United States shall be to continue measures established in the Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument to protect the training, readiness, and global mobility of U.S. Armed Forces, and ensure protection of navigation rights and high seas freedoms under the law of the sea, which are essential to the peace and prosperity of civilized nations.

The security of America, the prosperity of its citizens, and the protection of the

ocean environment are complementary and reinforcing priorities. As the United States takes measures to conserve and protect the living and non-living resources of the ocean, it shall ensure preservation of the navigation rights and high seas freedoms enjoyed by all nations under the law of the sea, including in particular:

- The right of innocent passage in territorial seas, without requirement for prior notification to or permission from a coastal state.
- The right of transit passage for ships, submarines, and aircraft in straits used for international navigation; a right that may not be suspended, denied, hampered, or impaired.
- The right of archipelagic sea lanes passage in designated sea lanes and air routes, and passage routes normally used for international navigation in archipelagic nations.
- The exercise of high seas freedoms in exclusive economic zones, including the conduct of military activities, exercises, and surveys.

The United States shall recognize and apply navigation rights and freedoms under the law of the sea when establishing marine protected areas, just as it did in the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands Marine National

Monument and in today's monument proclamations. The United States will exercise the same rights and freedoms in similarly protected areas and waters of foreign nations. In addition, the United States, through its executive agencies, shall provide for the readiness, training, and global mobility of U.S. Armed Forces in its establishment of marine conservation areas.

#### *Management of Submerged Lands*

The Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) is the only United States territory that does not have title to the submerged lands beneath that portion of the United States territorial sea that is within 3 miles of the coastlines of the CNMI. It is appropriate that the CNMI be given the same authority as the other territories. In 2005, my administration supported legislation that would have provided the CNMI with such ownership, consistent with what was granted to Guam, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa in October 1974.

My administration also recognizes, as was recognized in 1974, the need to reserve Federal title in certain submerged lands, including submerged lands for use by our Nation's military, which is moving forces

to the area from Okinawa, Japan. It is in the interest of the security of our Nation to reserve the necessary areas for national defense, while also ensuring the people of the CNMI have the benefit and enjoyment of the rights coming with ownership of submerged lands out to 3 miles.

To this end, I have asked the Secretary of the Interior to submit legislation that, subject to valid existing rights, transfers to the CNMI the existing rights and title of the Federal Government over submerged lands within 3 miles of the coast of the CNMI, consistent with that provided to Guam, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa, and I urge the Congress to promptly pass such legislation.

I have also directed the Department of the Interior to develop legislation and procedures for the management and administration of recovery of mineral resources in areas of the Pacific, outside the monument, that are not currently covered by existing offshore mineral resource law, including authority and procedures for obtaining royalties and assessing fees and for revenue sharing, as appropriate.

NOTE: The proclamations are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

## Remarks During a Meeting With Former Presidents and the President-Elect

*January 7, 2009*

I want to thank the President-elect for joining the ex-Presidents for lunch. I am—one message that I have, and I think we all share, is that we want you to succeed. Whether we're a Democrat or Republican, we care deeply about this country. And to the extent we can, we look forward to sharing our experiences with you. All of us who have served in this office itself understand that the office transcends the individual.

And we wish you all the very best, and so does the country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Participating in the meeting were former Presidents Jimmy Carter, George H.W. Bush, and William J. Clinton; and President-elect Barack Obama. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President-elect Obama. The Office